

REMARKS

In the final Office Action, dated August 21, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1-7, 9, 16-20, 22-24, 33, 34 and 37-39 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by WO 00/79436 (hereinafter “STIBEL”) and rejected claims 14, 15 and 28-32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over STIBEL in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,098,081 (hereinafter “HEIDORN”).

By way of this amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 1-7, 9, 14-20, 22-24 and 28-34 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 37 has been amended to improve form. New claims 40-57 have been added. No new matter has been added by the present amendment. Claims 37-57 are currently pending. Reconsideration of the outstanding rejection of pending claims 37-39 is respectfully requested in view of the amendments above and the following remarks.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

On page 2, the final Office Action rejects pending claims 37-39 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by STIBEL. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Amended independent claim 37, for example, recites a method that includes “receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query,” “broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query” and “executing a search using the broadened search query.”

A proper rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 requires that a reference teach every aspect of the claimed invention. See M.P.E.P. § 2131. STIBEL does not disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in Applicants' amended claim 37. For example, STIBEL does not disclose or suggest "receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query" and "broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query," as recited in amended claim 37.

In rejecting claim 37, the final Office Action (pg. 5) relies on page 5, lines 4-7; page 4, lines 27-32 and page 4, lines 7-11 of STIBEL for allegedly disclosing the features of claim 37. Applicants submit that these sections of STIBEL cited by the final Office Action, or any other section of STIBEL, do not disclose or suggested the above-noted features of amended claim 37.

At page 5, lines 3-9, STIBEL discloses:

In these processes, the process of analyzing the user search request may include matching a portion of the key phrases entered by the user, or otherwise obtained, against a linguistic database to identify a list of associated meanings. Optionally, the list of associated meanings may be processed to generate a display that presents to the user a plurality of meanings associated with the key phrase or key phrases and which aid the user in disambiguating between a plurality of different meanings.

This section of STIBEL merely discloses the identification of a list of associated meanings for key phrases entered by a user and presentation of the list of associated meanings to the user to aid the user in disambiguating between the different meanings. This section of STIBEL does not disclose, or even suggest, "receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with a first

one of the search terms of the search query" and "broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query," as recited in amended claim 37.

At page 4, lines 27-32, STIBEL discloses:

This such profile data may include providing category information that is capable of being selected by the user to identify a topic associated with the user search strategy, and may also include providing profile data that includes providing subcategory information which is capable of being displayed to the user in response to the user's selection of a category and capable of providing information for refining the user's search strategy.

This section of STIBEL merely discloses the provision of category/subcategory information for identifying topics that may be used by the user in refining the user's search strategy. This section of STIBEL, however, does not disclose, or even suggest, "receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query" and "broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query," as recited in amended claim 37.

At page 4, lines 2-12, STIBEL discloses:

The front ends may include a user interface that is presented to a user and which may prompt the user to enter one or more key phrases that are representative of a user search request. The user interface may collect the key phrases provided by the user and may analyze these key phrases to identify at least one meaning that may be associated with this user search request. The systems may then process the user search request and the identified meaning to generate an expanded search request that may be represented as a compound search string, such as a Boolean search string, or other logical string. This compound search string may then be processed to create one or more expanded user queries that may be presented to a search engine to collect from the search engine information that is relevant to the interest of the user.

This section of STIBEL discloses the receipt of key phrases of a user search request and analysis of the key phrases to identify at least one meaning that may be associated with the user search request. This section of STIBEL further discloses that a compound search string may be generated that includes the user search request and the identified meaning, and the compound search string is processed to create an expanded user query. This section of STIBEL, however, does not disclose or suggest “receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes at least one user-selected operator associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query” and “broadening the first one of the search terms based on the at least one user-selected operator to produce a broadened search query,” as recited in amended claim 37.

Since STIBEL does not disclose or suggest each and every feature of amended claim 37, STIBEL cannot anticipate claim 37. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 37 is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Claim 38 depends from claim 37 and, therefore, patentably distinguishes over STIBEL for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 37. Claim 38 recites additional features not disclosed or suggested by STIBEL. For example, claim 38 recites the features “wherein the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with a second one of the search terms that indicates that the second one of the search terms should not be broadened” that are not disclosed or suggested by STIBEL. The final Office Action (pg. 6) relies on page 8, lines 18-25 of STIBEL for allegedly disclosing the above-noted feature of claim 38.

At page 8, lines 16-23, STIBEL discloses:

To this end the processes analyze the keyphrases or search terms entered by the user to identify a plurality of meanings that are associated with said keyphrases, as well as the topic of interest to the user. In one practice, an identifier signal may be provided for each of the different meanings that a keyphrase may have. Once a meaning is identified for being associated with the interest of the user, this identifier may be provided to a process, such as an ad server process for selecting content to deliver to the user, or to a profile building process for building, or modifying a profile associated with that user.

This section of STIBEL merely discloses the identification of multiple meanings associated with keyphrases of a search query entered by a user, and use of identifier “signals,” for each of the different meanings that a given keyphrase may have, for selecting ad content to deliver to the user. This section of STIBEL, however, does not disclose or suggest, or have anything to do with, “wherein the search query further includes a user-selected delimiter associated with a second one of the search terms that indicates that the second one of the search terms should not be broadened,” as recited in claim 38. Claim 38, therefore, patentably distinguishes over STIBEL for at least the additional reasons set forth above.

Independent claim 39 recites a method that includes “receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms,” “broadening one of the plurality of search terms,” “excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query,” “executing a search based on the search query to provide search results” and “evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions.” In rejecting claim 39, the final Office Action (pg. 6) relies on page 5, lines 4-7; page 8, lines 19-21 and page 26, lines 15-20 of STIBEL for allegedly disclosing the above-noted features of claim 39. Applicants submit that the cited sections of STIBEL, or any other section of STIBEL, do not disclose or suggest, among other features, “excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search

query,” “executing a search based on the search query to provide search results” and “evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions,” as recited in claim 39.

As discussed above with respect to claim 37, lines 3-9 of page 5 of STIBEL merely discloses the identification of a list of associated meanings for key phrases entered by a user and presentation of the list of associated meanings to the user to aid the user in disambiguating between the different meanings. This section of STIBEL does not disclose, or have anything to do with, “excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query,” “executing a search based on the search query to provide search results” and “evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions,” as recited in claim 39.

As further discussed above with respect to claim 37, lines 16-23 of page 8 of STIBEL merely discloses the identification of multiple meanings associated with keyphrases of a search query entered by a user, and use of identifier “signals,” for each of the different meanings that a given keyphrase may have, for selecting ad content to deliver to the user. This section of STIBEL does not disclose, or have anything to do with, “excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query,” “executing a search based on the search query to provide search results” and “evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions,” as recited in claim 39.

At page 26, lines 11-20, STIBEL discloses:

In this way, the user interest identified by the systems and methods described herein, may be combined with the user's demographic, geographic and other suitable information collected in the click stream, off-line, through user profile

forms, or other sources, to build a user profile. Specifically, in one practice, click stream data being uploaded from one server to a profiling server may be combined with user interest data collected by the search engine front ends described herein. Accordingly, in practice, the identified user interest maybe formatted as clickstream data and provided to the profile building process, for modifying the user's profile. Alternatively, the profile building process may include a process for *associating the identified user interest with an existing category of interest*, that the profile building process can employ for modifying, or building a user profile. In either case, the user interest may be combined and processed for generating a more targeted understanding of the user's profile. (emphasis added)

This section of STIBEL merely discloses the generation and modification of a user profile using identified user interest data that may be associated with existing categories of interest. The user profile may include, for example, the user's demographic, geographic or other information collected in the user's click stream. This section of STIBEL, however, does not disclose, or have anything to do with, "excluding the broadened one of the plurality of search terms from the search query," "executing a search based on the search query to provide search results" and "evaluating the search results relative to the excluded search term using categorical or clustered distinctions," as recited in claim 39.

Since STIBEL does not disclose each and every feature of claim 39, STIBEL cannot anticipate claim 39. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 39 is, therefore, respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

On page 7, the final Office Action rejects claims 14, 15 and 28-32 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over STIBEL in view of HEIDORN. Claims 14, 15 and

28-32 have been canceled by the present amendment, therefore, the rejection of these claims is moot.

New claims 40-47 depend from claim 37 and, therefore, patentably distinguish over STIBEL for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 37.

New claim 48 recites a method that includes “receiving a first search query comprising a plurality of terms,” “excluding a first term of the plurality of terms from the first search query to produce a second search query,” “executing a first search based on the second search query to retrieve first search results,” “mapping the first search results into related terms that are associated with the first term” and “executing a second search based on a third search query that includes the plurality of terms and the related terms to retrieve second search results.”

Applicants submit that STIBEL or HEIDORN, either singly or in any reasonable combination, do not disclose or suggest this combination of features. New claim 48, therefore, patentably distinguishes over the cited references.

New claims 49-57 recite a method that includes “receiving a search query comprising a plurality of search terms from a user, wherein the search query includes a user-assigned strength associated with a first one of the search terms of the search query,” “broadening the first one of the search terms to an extent determined by the user-assigned strength to produce a broadened search query” and “executing a search based on the broadened search query.” Applicants submit that STIBEL or HEIDORN, either singly or in any reasonable combination, do not disclose or suggest this combination of features. New claims 49-57, therefore, patentably distinguish over the cited references.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request the

Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1070 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,



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